UNITED NATIONS

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.
GENERAL

CEDAW/C/1998/I/4
24 December 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
Eighteenth session
19 January-6 February 1998
Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

WAYS AND MEANS OF EXPEDITING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Report by the Secretariat

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 3	3
II.	RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COMMITTEE AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER ENTITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM	4 - 5	3
III.	SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND OTHER RAPPORTEURS	6 - 7	4
IV.	PRE-SESSION WORKING GROUP	8 - 9	5
V.	EIGHTH MEETING OF PERSONS CHAIRING THE HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES	10 - 21	5
VI.	COMPILATION OF THE VIEWS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS ON THE REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXPERT	22 - 25	8
VII.	SUBCOMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES	26 - 27	9

* CEDAW/C/1998/I/1 and Corr.1.

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CONTENTS (continued)

		Paragraphs	Page
VIII.	EXPERT GROUP MEETINGS CONVENED BY THE DIVISION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN	28 - 31	9
IX.	REPORTS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE TWENTIETH SESSION	32	11
X.	TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS	33 - 36	11

Annexes

I.	States parties whose reports are more than five years overdue	13
II.	States parties whose reports have been submitted but have not yet been considered by the Committee	16
III.	Technical Cooperation Programme of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: Note for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	19

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report[1] addresses a number of issues raised by the Committee in discussions during its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions (13-31 January and 7-25 July 1997). These include:

- Relations with specialized agencies and other United Nations entities;

- The relationship between the Committee and the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and other non-conventional human rights mechanisms of the United Nations;

- The timing and operation of the pre-session working group;

- The promotion of the Convention and the Committee through technical and advisory services.

2. The report also contains:

- A compilation of comments made by Committee members on the final report on enhancing the long-term effectiveness of the United Nations human rights treaty system, prepared by the independent expert, Mr. Philip Alston,[2] appointed by the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 43/115 of 8 December 1988 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1989/47 of 6 March 1989;[3]

- Relevant issues considered at the eighth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaties bodies, held at Geneva from 15 to 19 September 1997;[4]

- Recommendations made to the Committee by the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the expert group meetings convened since the seventeenth session of the Committee by the Division for the Advancement of Women.

3. A list of States parties whose reports are more than five years overdue is contained in annex I to the present report. As requested by the Committee at earlier sessions, the present report also contains a list of States parties whose reports are to be considered in order of receipt taking into account geographical balance (see annex II).

II. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COMMITTEE AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER ENTITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

4. At its sixteenth session (January 1997), the Committee agreed to review its practice of nominating focal points for specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system. It also expressed the wish that the input of specialized agencies and other entities into its work within article 22 of the Convention should be more structured and country-specific. The Committee may wish to consider elaborating guidelines for the use of specialized agencies and

other entities in this regard, as well as formulating suggestions for strengthening dialogue and cooperation with those organizations. In addition, other United Nations entities, including the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), has expressed its wish to cooperate more closely with the Committee. The Committee may wish to pursue this with UNHCR and designate a focal point for the purpose of follow-up.

5. The Committee may also wish to consider the various ways in which specialized agencies and other United Nations entities could contribute to its work. In this regard, it may wish to consider the practice of a number of other treaty bodies which allow United Nations entities to participate in their pre-session meetings. Such a practice has been adopted by both the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It is suggested that the Committee allow representatives of specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies to present information, including that of a country-specific nature, at an assigned time during the pre-session working group.

III. SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND OTHER RAPPORTEURS

6. On a number of occasions, the Committee has underlined the need for cooperation between itself and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, whose mandate was extended for a further three years by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1997/44 of 11 April 1997. The Committee may wish to consider specific working procedures to strengthen cooperation between itself and the Special Rapporteur and measures that will mutually reinforce their separate, but interrelated, mandates. In particular, the Committee may wish to consider developing the practice of commenting on the reports of the Special Rapporteur or requesting the Special Rapporteur to provide it with information specific to the States parties whose reports are before it at particular sessions. The Committee may also wish to consider whether it wishes to alert the Special Rapporteur to trends relating to, or patterns of, violence against women, or particular country situations which may require investigation. The Committee might wish to consider whether it wishes to identify a focal point or focal group from among its members to interact with the Special Rapporteur between sessions of the Committee.

7. The Committee may wish to consider specific working procedures in regard to other Special Rapporteurs of both the Commission on Human Rights and the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. For example, it may wish to consider specific proposals to enhance cooperation between itself and the Special Rapporteurs on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance, or the Special Rapporteurs of the Subcommission with respect to traditional practices affecting the health of women and children, and systematic rape and sexual slavery during armed conflict. Again, the Committee may wish to consider the identification of focal points to liaise with these and other non-conventional human rights mechanisms.

IV. PRE-SESSION WORKING GROUP

8. At its seventeenth session, the Committee decided that the expert from among its members who had been designated rapporteur for a particular country should send her introductory report on the most relevant matters relating to the situation of women in that country to the pre-session working group. Responsibility for preparing questions on subsequent reports for the working group would be shared among Committee members, with two or three members being given responsibility for each report. The Committee may wish to assess these practices, and reflect further on the approach of the pre-session working group, including identifying further assistance that might be provided to it by the Secretariat. In that regard, it may wish to take into account the approach of the Human Rights Committee, whose pre-session working group considers a concise list of issues drawn up by the country rapporteur and/or the Secretariat.

9. The Committee may also wish to reconsider whether it wishes, in the future, to convene its pre-session working group at the beginning or the end of the previous session, as decided at its sixteenth session. In the event it wishes to move to the practice of convening its pre-session working group at the end of the previous session, it may wish to consider the timing and modalities of this change of approach to affect a smooth transition in this regard.

V. EIGHTH MEETING OF PERSONS CHAIRING THE HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES

10. The report of the eighth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, which has been made available to the Committee members, raises a number of issues pertinent to the work of the Committee. The chairpersons noted the importance of the universal ratification of United Nations human rights treaties and called for the establishment of a separate human rights treaty ratification fund and the appointment of a specialist coordinator to encourage universal ratification. The Committee may wish to discuss the implications of the establishment of such a fund for ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and of the appointment of a coordinator in promoting ratification of the Convention.

11. The chairpersons recommended that individual treaty bodies should give particular attention to the special situation of States with very small populations for which the reporting requirements under the human rights treaties might appear particularly daunting, especially where there was a lack of trained personnel to draft initial and periodic reports. The Committee may wish to consider this recommendation in the light of the fact that a number of States parties to the Convention are countries with very small populations. In this regard, the Committee might wish to note the recommendation made by the chairpersons that, in view of the costs and difficulties some small developing States might face in relation to the oral presentation of reports, consideration should be given to the possibility of examining reports of States parties by means of a video conference link between the Committee room and the national capital. The cost implications to the United Nations of such an approach would, of course, need to be examined.

12. Taking account of the fact that the reports of many States parties are overdue and that, when submitted, reports have often not been reviewed for up to three years, the chairpersons recommended that the periodic reports of States parties should be focused on a limited range of issues, which would be identified by individual committees in advance. The chairpersons noted that such an approach would eliminate the need for lengthy reports, help to eliminate delay between the submission and examination of reports, enable problem areas to be dealt with in depth and facilitate the follow-up of concluding comments by States parties and the committee concerned. The Committee may wish to consider this recommendation and other strategies for addressing overdue reports, including the review of States parties' performance in the absence of a report or of the State party. In this regard, the Committee may wish to consider the practice of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, both of which review the situation in States parties whose reports are chronically overdue. In this regard, the Committee may wish to note that the General Assembly has encouraged these initiatives[5] and the meeting of chairpersons has suggested that treaty bodies might wish to review the approach of both the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination with respect to their own working methods.

13. The Committee may wish to note that the meeting called for greater efforts by treaty bodies to make full use of time available and that time use statistics compiled by the Secretariat suggested that delay to the start of meetings resulted in the loss of up to 15 minutes of conference services each day. The Committee may also wish to note that the chairpersons recommended that the task of expressing courtesies towards the representatives of reporting States should be entrusted solely to the chairperson of each committee. Members should be discouraged from adding further expressions of welcome or appreciation.

14. The chairpersons recalled[6] the recommendation from their seventh meeting, in September 1996, that "members of treaty bodies refrain from participating in any aspect of the consideration of the reports of the States of which they are nationals, or communications or inquiries concerning those States, in order to maintain the highest standards of impartiality, both in substance and appearance".[7] The chairpersons also recommended that "States parties to human rights treaties should refrain from nominating or electing to the treaty bodies persons performing political functions or occupying positions which were not readily reconcilable with the obligations of independent experts under the given treaty".[8] The chairpersons furthermore urged that consideration be given to the importance of expertise in areas related to the mandate of the treaty body, the need for balanced geographical composition, the desirability of an appropriate gender balance and the nominee's availability in terms of time to discharge the responsibilities of an expert member of a treaty body.[9]

15. The Committee will also recall the Human Rights Committee's guidelines for the exercise of functions by members agreed at its sixty-third session in November 1997.[10] The guidelines are informed by "guiding principles" of independence and impartiality which stress that independence of members of the Human Rights Committee is essential and that members should avoid any action in relation to the work of the Committee which might lead, or might be seen to lead, to unequal treatment between States.

16. The guidelines indicate that it is the practice of the Committee that a member does not participate in the examination of reports presented by his/her country by asking questions, making observations or in any other manner. He/she may be present during the dialogue and should, as a member, receive all the relevant documents. Other practices to be observed by members are that a member should not participate in any way in discussing or drafting the concluding observations by his/her own county and that a member should not participate in consultations between the Committee and non-governmental organizations or specialized agencies when the report of his/her own country is being discussed.

17. In addition, the guidelines indicate that if a member of the Committee is a member of a national non-governmental organization, he or she should observe neutrality and not play any active part in the preparation or submission of information to the Committee. They also suggest that it is desirable for a member of the Committee to abstain from being on the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee of an international non-governmental organization which regularly submits reports or information to the Committee, so as to avoid the appearance of any conflict in their respective capacities.

18. Insofar as relationships with government are concerned, the guidelines indicate that Committee members should abstain from engaging in any functions or activities which may appear to be not readily reconcilable with the obligations of an independent expert. Members should abstain from participation in any political body of the United Nations or of any other intergovernmental body concerned with human rights. They should also abstain from acting as experts, consultants or counsels for any Government in a matter that may come up for consideration by the Committee.

19. The Human Rights Committee guidelines indicate further that a member of the Committee acting as an independent rapporteur, expert or member of an independent working group is not as such incompatible with his or her obligation as an independent expert. A member of the Committee who is a special rapporteur in respect of a State whose report is to be presented to the Committee should not participate in dialogue with that State, but thematic rapporteurs should not automatically abstain from such participation, unless there is a situation of possible conflict. Finally, the guidelines suggest that when members of the Committee participate in other human rights activities of intergovernmental organizations such as training courses and seminars, they should make it clear that the views they are expressing are their own and not the views of the Committee.

20. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women may wish to consider making these guidelines available to its new members.

21. As part of the follow-up to the round table of human rights treaty bodies on "Human Rights Approaches to Women's Health with a Focus on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights", convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNHCR and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) at Glen Cove, New York, in 1996, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) coordinated a presentation on the issue of HIV/AIDS at the meeting of chairpersons. As a result, the chairpersons recommended that each treaty body should give careful attention to the measures which it might take in relation to

the relevant human rights aspects of HIV/AIDS, including, where appropriate, adopting or revising general comments and recommendations, amending reporting guidelines and addressing those issues in their dialogue with States parties and in their concluding comments or observations. The Committee may wish to consider this recommendation of the chairpersons in preparing its general recommendation on article 12.

VI. COMPILATION OF THE VIEWS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS ON THE REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXPERT

22. At its seventeenth session (July 1997), the Committee requested members to submit their views to the Secretariat on the report on the independent expert on the functioning of the human rights treaty bodies and requested that the Secretariat compile these comments for submission to the Committee at its eighteenth session. Two Committee members submitted views with respect to the report of the independent expert. Those views are summarized below.

23. One member, although agreeing with the goal of universal ratification, rejected the notion of a specific trust fund and the employment of two advisers on ratification and reporting, in favour of consultation between members of treaty bodies. This member also rejected the idea of examining the situation in a country in the absence of a report, suggesting that wider use be made of professional advisory services programmes designed to assist in the preparation of reports. The member rejected the suggestion that consolidated reports should be accepted by States parties with more than one reporting obligation, on the basis that there would be little attention paid to the Commission on the Eliminations of Discrimination against Women. She suggested that a working group of United Nations human rights treaty bodies should be convened to address the overlap in the work of treaty bodies.

24. The other member who commented on the paper agreed with the need to promote accession and ratification. She suggested that recognized non-governmental organizations in the countries concerned could play a role in this regard and that the suggestion to provide international assistance and advice for the preparation of reports or the ratification of treaties would be useful, provided that the State concerned had requested it, but that access to such resources should not be automatic. This member suggested that, except in the case of initial reports, the reports of States parties should be limited to 50 pages and should be presented in accordance with reporting guidelines. She suggested that only up-to-date reports should be considered by the relevant Committee and that States parties should submit them 18 months in advance of their consideration date and that processing of reports should be more efficient. She did not believe that guidelines for the preparation of reports should be adjusted to the situation of each State party, as this could only be subjective. She commented that review of States parties in their absence was an issue which required careful consideration and that information supplied by sources other than the State party should be sent to the State party so that it could express its opinion. In this context, she expressed the view that the main source of information should be the State party itself and she emphasized the importance of respect for States parties' sovereignty and the need for States parties to be involved in decision-making processes. She expressed doubts regarding the

proposal for treaty bodies to bring matters to the attention of the Security Council. She was opposed to the notion of consolidation of the treaty bodies and doubted the feasibility of consolidated reports. She also commented that the duties of experts should not be undertaken by the Secretariat; thus the proposals put forward in this regard should be treated with caution. Finally, she stressed the importance of multilingualism in the context of the work of the treaty bodies and noted that electronic databases were not accessible in all countries. She underlined the importance of ensuring equitable geographical distribution in the membership of treaty bodies and suggested the introduction of geographical quotas.

25. The Committee may wish to take these views into account in connection with its discussion of proposals put forward by the meeting of chairpersons (see paras. 10 and 12 above).

VII. SUBCOMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

26. At its 1997 session, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on 29 August adopted resolution 1997/19, entitled "Women and the right to adequate housing and to land and property". In the resolution, the Subcommission invited the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to pay special attention to the issue of housing, land and property rights of women when examining States parties' reports, and to explore the possibility of adopting a general recommendation on women and housing rights as that related, inter alia, to the provisions of article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, with a view to clarifying the obligations of States parties to the Convention in that respect. The Committee may wish to consider this suggestion in the context of its long-term programme with regard to preparation of general recommendations.

27. On the same date, the Subcommission also adopted resolution 1997/22, entitled "Report of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery". In the resolution the Subcommission, inter alia, recommended that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, when examining the periodic reports of States parties, should give particular attention to the implementation of article 6 of the Convention and include in its guidelines an item concerning contemporary forms of slavery. The Committee may wish to consider this recommendation in any review of its reporting guidelines.

VIII. EXPERT GROUP MEETINGS CONVENED BY THE DIVISION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

28. Since the seventeenth session of the Committee, the Division for the Advancement of Women has convened three expert group meetings: on "Adolescent Girls and their Rights", Addis Ababa, 13-17 October 1997; "Gender-based Persecution", York University, Toronto, Canada, 9-12 November 1997; and "Women's Enjoyment of Economic and Social Rights", Abo Akedemi, Turku, Finland, 1-4 December 1997. The Division also co-hosted a fourth expert group meeting on "Caregiving for Older Persons - Gender Dimensions", which took place in

Valletta, Malta, from 30 November to 2 December 1997. Three of the meetings agreed on several recommendations directed at the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Committee may wish to discuss these recommendations and other issues raised in the reports of the meetings which have been made available to members.

29. The Expert Group Meeting on "Adolescent Girls and their Rights" stressed the importance of implementing and internalizing the existing international human rights standards, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and with regard to adolescent girls. It made various recommendations directed towards this goal, including that the Committee on the Rights of the Child and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should, when considering the reports submitted by States parties, give particular focus to the consideration of the full enjoyment by adolescent girls of their rights. It also recommended that members of the United Nations human rights treaty monitoring bodies should focus their attention on adolescent girls' health and rights, including their rights to reproductive and sexual health.

30. The Expert Group Meeting on "Gender-based Persecution" recognized the potential of the human rights framework to promote and protect the interests of women affected by armed conflict. It recommended that the issues relating to the treatment of refugee women in countries of asylum and the treatment of internally displaced women in their countries of origin should be addressed in the work of the United Nations treaty bodies, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. It recommended that the concluding comments of treaty bodies should address the specific issues of refugee, internally displaced and returnee women. Noting the importance of the general comments and recommendations of treaty bodies, the meeting recommended that the Committee consider formulating a general recommendation on refugee and displaced women, taking into account articles 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16 of the Convention, and that in the preparation of its general recommendation on article 12, on women's right to health care, the Committee should reflect on the needs of refugee and internally displaced women. The meeting also recommended the formulation by CEDAW of a specific general recommendation on gender-based persecution in armed conflict.

31. The Expert Group Meeting on "Women's Enjoyment of Economic and Social Rights" recommended that the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should consider issuing a joint comment or statement on the indivisibility of civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights and the centrality of gender awareness of those rights as part of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Recognizing the effective contribution of the meeting of representatives of all treaty bodies at Glen Cove in 1996 (see para. 21), the meeting encouraged treaty bodies or individual members of treaty bodies to meet with each other to explore thematic issues relating to women's enjoyment of economic and social rights. Treaty bodies were encouraged to appoint individual members to liaise with specialized agencies or other intergovernmental bodies of most relevance to their respective mandate and to invite representatives of international financial institutions and other

international and multilateral and development institutions to present to them an analysis of the impact of their activities on women's enjoyment of economic and social rights in the light of international standards in general, and in relation to particular States.

IX. REPORTS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE TWENTIETH SESSION

32. At its seventeenth session the Committee adopted decision 17/II, in which it decided that "the maximum number of reports to be considered at each session will normally be eight, drawn from a proposed list of up to ten countries".[11] The Committee therefore proposed a list of States parties from which eight reports would be selected for review at the twentieth session. As the Committee will consider the report of the Czech Republic at its eighteenth session, and several other States parties listed for the nineteenth session have indicated that they may not be able to present their reports at that time, the Committee may wish to review its proposed list for the nineteenth session and, in drawing up the lists for the twentieth and twenty-first sessions, it may wish to take account of annex II, which indicates reports of States parties that are available, particularly those available in the official languages.

X. TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

33. At its sixteenth session, the Committee suggested that the budget of the Centre for Human Rights of the United Nations Secretariat for technical and advisory services be made available to promote the Convention and the work of the Committee and to facilitate seminars on such issues as reservations. It agreed that a small working group of Committee members would be convened at its seventeenth session to conceptualize those seminars and to examine funding requirements.[12]

34. In order to facilitate the Committee's discussion of the issues raised in its decision, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has provided a statement of its work on technical and advisory services and how the Convention and the Committee could be promoted through those services (see annex III to the present report).

35. The Committee may wish to suggest areas in which the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and the Division for the Advancement of Women may cooperate with regard to particular projects of the Technical Cooperation Programme of the Office. The Division for the Advancement of Women is taking steps to ensure that the Office is fully apprised of the profile of the members of the Committee so that their expertise can be called upon.

36. The Committee may wish to formulate requests for technical cooperation based upon recommendations made by treaty bodies when examining the reports of States parties. Currently the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Committee make recommendations which include and make specific reference to the possibility of States parties obtaining technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In

this regard, the Committee may be able to identify areas such as review of reservations, assistance with legislative review, institutional development, training of professional groups and support to civil society, where the provision of technical assistance could contribute to the improvement of the human rights of women in the State concerned.

Notes

[1] At its twelfth session, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women decided that the Secretariat should prepare a report on ways and means of improving the work of the Committee every year (Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/48/38), para. 632). Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/68 of 12 December 1996, in which the Assembly authorized the Committee to hold two sessions annually, the Secretariat has provided the Committee with a report on ways and means for each session.

[2] E/CN.4/1997/74.

[3] Two previous reports were submitted by the independent expert at the request of the General Assembly: A/44/668 and A/CONF.157/PC/62/Add.11/Rev.1.

[4] A/52/507.

[5] General Assembly resolution 51/80.

[6] A/52/507, annex, para. 67.

[7] A/51/482, annex, para. 29.

[8] A/52/507, para. 68.

[9] Ibid.

[10] CCPR/C/63/CRP.2/Add.2.

[11] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/52/38/Rev.1), part two, chap. I.B, decision 17/II.

[12] Ibid., part one, chap. I.B, suggestion 16/1.

Annex I

STATES PARTIES WHOSE REPORTS ARE MORE THAN FIVE YEARS OVERDUE

State party	Date due
A. Initial reports	
Angola	17 October 1987
Bhutan	30 September 1982
Brazil	2 March 1985
Cape Verde	3 September 1982
Central African Republic	21 July 1992
Congo	25 August 1983
Costa Rica	4 May 1987
Dominica	3 September 1982
Estonia	20 November 1992
Grenada	29 September 1991
Guinea	8 September 1983
Guinea-Bissau	22 September 1986
Haiti	3 September 1982
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1982
Liberia	16 August 1985
Malta	7 April 1992
Nepal	22 May 1992
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1986
Saint Lucia	7 November 1983
Sierra Leone	11 December 1989
Togo	26 October 1984
Trinidad and Tobago	11 February 1991

State party	Date due
B. Second periodic reports	
Angola	17 October 1991
Bhutan	30 September 1986
Brazil	2 March 1989
Burkina Faso	13 November 1992
Cape Verde	3 September 1986
Congo	25 August 1987
Costa Rica	4 May 1991
Dominica	3 September 1986
Gabon	20 February 1988
Guinea	8 September 1987
Guinea-Bissau	22 September 1990
Guyana	3 September 1986
Haiti	3 September 1986
Iraq	12 September 1991
Jamaica	18 November 1989
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1986
Liberia	16 August 1989
Malawi	11 April 1992
Mali	10 October 1990
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1990
Saint Lucia	7 November 1987
Togo	26 October 1988
Uruguay	8 November 1986
Viet Nam	19 March 1987

State party	Date due
C. Third periodic reports	
Bhutan	30 September 1990
Cape Verde	3 September 1990
Congo	25 August 1991
Dominica	3 September 1990
El Salvador	18 September 1990
Gabon	20 February 1992
Guatemala	11 September 1991
Guinea	8 September 1991
Guyana	3 September 1990
Haiti	3 September 1990
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1990
Mongolia	3 September 1990
Saint Lucia	7 November 1991
Sri Lanka	4 November 1990
Togo	26 October 1992
Uruguay	8 November 1990
Viet Nam	19 March 1991
Yugoslavia	28 March 1991

Annex II

STATES PARTIES WHOSE REPORTS HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED BUT HAVE NOT YET BEEN CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

State party	Date due	Date received	Document number
	A. Initial reports		
Belize[a]	15 June 1991	19 June 1996	CEDAW/C/BLZ/1-2
Democratic Republic of the Congo[a] [b]	16 November 1987	1 March 1994	CEDAW/C/ZAR/1
Jordan	31 July 1993	27 October 1997	CEDAW/C/JOR/1
Liechtenstein	21 January 1997	4 August 1997	CEDAW/C/LIE/1
Slovakia[a]	27 June 1994	29 April 1996	CEDAW/C/SVK/1
	B. Second periodic reports		
Belize[a]	15 June 1995	19 June 1996	CEDAW/C/BLZ/1-2
Burkina Faso	13 November 1992	11 December 1997	CEDAW/C/BFA/2-3
Chile[a]	6 January 1995	9 March 1995	CEDAW/C/CHI/2
Democratic Republic of the Congo[a] [b]	16 November 1991	24 October 1996	CEDAW/C/ZAR/2
Equatorial Guinea[a]	22 November 1989	6 January 1994	CEDAW/C/GNQ/2-3
Germany	9 August 1990	8 October 1996	CEDAW/C/DEU/2-3
Greece	7 July 1988	1 March 1996	CEDAW/C/GRC/2-3
Ireland	22 January 1991	6 February 1997	CEDAW/C/IRL/2-3
Nigeria[c]	13 July 1990	13 February 1997	CEDAW/C/NGA/2-3
Panama[c]	28 November 1986	17 January 1997	CEDAW/C/PAN/2-3
Thailand	8 September 1990	3 March 1997	CEDAW/C/THA/2-3
United Republic of Tanzania[c]	19 September 1990	25 September 1996	CEDAW/C/TZA/2-3

State party	Date due	Date received	Document number
	C. Third periodic reports		
Austria	30 April 1991	25 April 1997	CEDAW/C/AUT/3-4
Belarus[c]	3 September 1990	1 July 1993	CEDAW/C/BLR/3
Burkina Faso	13 November 1996	11 December 1997	CEDAW/C/BFA/2-3
China	3 September 1990	29 May 1997	CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4
Egypt	18 October 1990	30 January 1996	CEDAW/C/EGY/3
Equatorial Guinea[a]	22 November 1993	6 January 1994	CEDAW/C/GNQ/2-3
Finland	4 October 1995	28 January 1997	CEDAW/C/FIN/3
Germany	9 August 1994	8 October 1996	CEDAW/C/DEU/2-3
Greece	7 July 1992	1 March 1996	CEDAW/C/GRC/2-3
Ireland	22 January 1995	7 August 1997	CEDAW/C/IRL/2-3
Nigeria[c]	13 July 1994	13 February 1997	CEDAW/C/NGA/2-3
Panama[c]	28 November 1990	17 January 1997	CEDAW/C/PAN/2-3
Peru	13 October 1991	25 November 1994	CEDAW/C/PER/3-4
Republic of Korea[a] [c]	26 January 1994	8 September 1994	CEDAW/C/KOR/3
Spain	4 February 1993	20 May 1996	CEDAW/C/ESP/3
Thailand	8 September 1994	3 March 1997	CEDAW/C/THA/2-3
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland[a] [c]	7 May 1995	16 August 1995 8 August 1997	CEDAW/C/UK/3 CEDAW/C/UK/3/Add.1
United Republic of Tanzania	19 September 1994	25 September 1996	CEDAW/C/TZA/2-3

State party	Date due	Date received	Document number
	D. Fourth periodic reports		
Austria	30 April 1995	25 April 1997	CEDAW/C/AUT/3-4
China	3 September 1994	29 May 1997	CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4
Colombia	18 February 1995	8 July 1997	CEDAW/C/COL/4
Denmark	21 May 1996	9 January 1997	CEDAW/C/DEN/4
Peru[c]	13 October 1995	25 November 1994	CEDAW/C/PER/3-4
Sweden	3 September 1994	21 May 1996	CEDAW/C/SWE/4

[a] Reports that have been translated, reproduced and available in all official languages.

[b] By a communication dated 20 May 1997, the Secretariat was informed by the Member State known formerly as "Zaire" that the name of the State had been changed to "the Democratic Republic of the Congo".

[c] To be considered by the Committee at its nineteenth session, to be held in New York from 22 June to 10 July 1998.

Annex III

TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS: NOTE FOR THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

A. Description of the programme

1. The Technical Cooperation Programme in the field of human rights is a United Nations global programme coordinated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Its aim is to build a culture of human rights at the national and regional levels by promoting the incorporation of international human standards into national laws, policies and practices; and by strengthening key institutions and infrastructures which support and promote human rights. Technical cooperation is provided to or through Governments, only upon request. Assistance can be in one or more of a range of different fields, including constitutional and legislative reform; training of government officials in human rights matters and in the preparation of reports to treaty bodies; establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions; human rights training for professional groups, including judges, lawyers, prosecutors, police and prison personnel; human rights and humanitarian law training for military officials and peacekeepers; teacher-training and curriculum development; and support to regional human rights bodies, non-governmental organizations and civil society.

2. Over the past decade, the programme has grown significantly, in terms of available funding, requests and activities. This growth has been accompanied by an effort to adopt and apply standard United Nations system technical cooperation procedures and methods of work. The substantial content of the Programme has also changed dramatically. Prior to the 1990s, the technical cooperation was largely devoted to sponsoring national and regional conferences and seminars. Increasingly, however, requests for assistance are being met by an attempt to define (in close partnership with recipient countries) the shape of such assistance. Expert assessment missions are now routinely conducted in order to identify precisely human rights technical assistance needs. These needs are then matched, as far as possible, with the various services on offer. The fielding of such missions has led to the development of comprehensive "country projects" in place of ad hoc, one-time activities. For certain comprehensive country projects, a field presence has been established to oversee their effective implementation (e.g., Cambodia and Palestine).

3. Close attention is now being given to "programme development" - the strengthening of internal capacity with regard to certain components of the programme. Examples of programme development include the elaboration of technical training manuals for professional audiences, including police, lawyers and judges and human rights monitors.

B. Funding and administration of the programme

4. The Technical Cooperation Programme is funded from the regular budget of the United Nations and (to a greater extent) from the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation on the Field of Human Rights. In addition, specific projects are occasionally funded or partially funded by the partners of the Office of the High Commissioner in the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Voluntary Fund is administered by a Board of Trustees which was established in 1993. The Board meets twice a year to review project proposals, as well as the overall operation and management of Voluntary Fund resources.

C. Technical cooperation and the human rights of women

5. The human rights of women have not been properly dealt with under the Technical Cooperation Programme - a situation which reflects the lack of a gender perspective within the wider human rights system. The Office of the High Commissioner is under a clear obligation to address this issue. In the Vienna Declaration and Programme for Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, Member States formally recognized the human rights of women to be "an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights".[a] They further demanded that "the equal status of women, and the human rights of women ... be integrated into the mainstream of United Nations system-wide activity".[b] The Vienna Declaration requested that steps be taken by, inter alia, the (then) Centre for Human Rights, to ensure that all human rights activities "regularly address violations of women's human rights including gender-specific abuses".[c] It further recommended that training be provided for human rights personnel to assist them in identifying human rights abuses particular to women and in carrying out their work without gender bias.

6. In the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the 1995 World Conference on Women, Member States called on the United Nations to provide "appropriate technical assistance and other forms of assistance to the countries with economies in transition in order to facilitate solution of their specific problems regarding advancement of women". Member States also "... encourage[d] incorporation of a gender perspective in national programmes of action and in human rights and national institutions, within the context of human rights advisory services programmes".[d]

7. Over the past several years, the Commission on Human Rights has adopted resolutions on the matter of integrating the human rights of women into the work of the United Nations human rights mechanisms, particularly into the work of the "mainstream" (resolutions 1993/46, 1994/45 and 1996/48). Similar resolutions have been adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women (resolutions 37/4, 1993; 38/2, 1994; and 39/5, 1995).

8. In July 1995, the Centre for Human Rights, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), convened an expert group meeting to draft guidelines on the incorporation of a gender perspective into the international human rights system. The purpose of the meeting was to assist the Centre for Human Rights, the United Nations human rights bodies and mechanisms

and other concerned human rights entities in developing an approach and methodology for drafting gender-sensitive guidelines and relevant material for the integration of the human rights of women into United Nations activities and programmes. In relation to technical cooperation, the meeting recommended that gender-specific data should be collected during needs assessment, project formulation and evaluation phases and that specific guidelines should be developed for use in all stages of the project cycle. Training in the human rights of women and in the application of gender-sensitive perspectives was also recommended for all project personnel.[e]

9. In late 1996, the Board of Trustees of the Fund endorsed a project which is intended to facilitate the integration of a gender perspective into all aspects of technical cooperation practices and procedures, from the needs assessment and project formulation phases to monitoring and evaluation. The project will involve five distinct steps, to be implemented consecutively: (i) a detailed assessment of past and current technical cooperation practices with respect to gender; (ii) the collection and collation of gender-integration expertise from other United Nations technical cooperation agencies; (iii) drafting of a working paper; (iv) the convening of a small technical working group to review this material and to develop draft procedures and guidelines as well as proposals for the revision of existing procedures and documentation; and (v) the field testing of the draft procedures and guidelines in the context of selected technical cooperation projects and activities. The project is a joint initiative with the Division for the Advancement of Women. Implementation commenced in July 1997 and the Technical Working Group (step iv) will be convened during February 1998.

D. Possibilities for working with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

10. As noted above, the Technical Cooperation Programme is subject to the usual United Nations financial and administrative regulations. In addition, the voluntary contributions are managed by the Board of Trustees. The administration of the programme falls within the overall responsibility of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The High Commissioner is obliged to take into account relevant resolutions (primarily of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights) when making decisions with respect to the programme. It is therefore not possible for the budget of the programme to be made available to promote the Convention and the work of the Committee and to facilitate seminars on such issues as reservations, as suggested in Committee suggestion 16/1,[f] unless very specific procedures are followed.

11. The Technical Cooperation Programme is actuated by the requests which it receives from States and it is only in unusual cases that a project proposal does not originate from or find its justification in a specific request of this nature. An exceptional proposal could, for example, concern a regional initiative involving the participation of representatives from a number of States. In such a situation, a proposal can be developed and submitted to the Board of Trustees, and, if endorsed, it will be submitted to the High Commissioner for consideration. Emphasis in this context is on practical, concrete initiatives which can point to specific objectives and outputs.

Notes

[a] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III, para. 14.

[b] Ibid., para. 34.

[c] Ibid., para. 42.

[d] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution I, annex I, paras. 339 and 231 (i).

[e] See E/CN.4/1996/105, annex.

[f] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/52/38/Rev.1), part one, chap. I.B, suggestion 16/1.